

BOOK REVIEWS

PHYSICAL DIAGNOSIS. By Ralph H. Major, M.D., Professor of Medicine, The University of Kansas. 4th edition. Illustrated. W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia. 1951. 446 pages. \$6.50.

The fact that this textbook on physical diagnosis has reached a fourth edition bespeaks its worth. It is one of the standard books on the subject. In each edition the author has improved the work by correction of inevitable errors, by improvements and additions to the text and by the further use of diagrams and illustrations. The fourth edition continues this trend.

The book is well organized. The material is presented in the sequence commonly followed in the performance of a physical examination. The text is well written and easy to read. An enlivening feature is the author's frequent quotation from classical descriptions together with interesting and pertinent anecdotes. Dr. Major believes, with Osler, that "when you can, read the original descriptions of the masters, who with crude methods of study, saw so clearly." Pertinent new facts and new interpretations are included. The material is thoroughly up to date. The whole is blended into a concise, interesting and easily readable text.

An outstanding feature of the book is the liberal use of diagrams and photographs. Many have been added and others have been improved since the earlier editions. They effectively supplement the text and greatly add to the interest of the book. Each chapter is concluded with a bibliography which documents the material of the text. As one might expect, the bibliography contains many references to classical descriptions which would be particularly valuable to those who are interested in the history of medicine or to those interested in further study.

All in all, this book is an excellent text on physical diagnosis. It presents the subject readably and effectively, with thoroughness and with perspective. It should be useful to the student, teacher and practitioner.

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PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC HEALTH ADMINISTRATION. By John J. Hanlon, M.S., M.D., M.P.H., Associate Professor of Public Health Practice, School of Public Health, University of Michigan. The C. V. Mosby Company, St. Louis, 1950. \$6.00.

This book should be interesting and valuable for every physician who recognizes professional responsibilities beyond those of private practice. From it, he can enhance his understanding of the motives and methods of public health workers. Hanlon devotes a section of 80 pages to the philosophy and background of public health, and maintains that successful workers in this field must be strongly idealistic. The shocking, abominable state of affairs under which life was lived a century and more ago is recounted, and the growth of a community conscience which led to the alleviation of these conditions is clearly set forth by the extensive use of quotations from the leaders in medicine, sanitary science, and social welfare of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Reading this, one can see how present-day public health workers may be impatient at delay in bringing all of our present knowledge of preventive medicine to all the people.

The introductory section also includes an extensive development of data on the economic value of public health work. Examples drawn from this should be effective in convincing laymen that support of well-designed preventive medical programs is a good investment.

Physicians interested in medical economics and the interrelationships of government and medicine will find valuable background material on the growth of the Federal govern-

ment programs which have modified activities in local health departments so markedly. Hanlon appears to be an open-minded conservative in his discussion of these matters. He devotes little space to the consideration of medical treatment or hospitalization as a public health measure, even for such diseases as tuberculosis and syphilis. He repeatedly emphasizes the important role to be played by private practitioners in a well-developed public health program. In his presentation of doctor-patient-government relationships, he strives to present facts on all sides of the issues and in general to let the reader draw his own conclusions.

The chapters on managing the work of others are done well. Although much of the material is obviously plain common sense, its presentation in a systematic and orderly way will help one to remember it and to use it in those times of stress when it is most needed. Although this material is addressed to a specific group, the principles and methods outlined can be used profitably in the private office, the home, or in the professional society equally well. Other topics covered include fiscal management, legal considerations, public relations, and the programs under the principal health department divisions, such as vital statistics, child and maternal health, and so on. Industrial hygiene services are slighted.

The main criticisms refer to form, rather than content: There is a frequent lack of juxtaposition between the tables and figures and the related text. The captions of the tables and figures are not as clear as they might be, in some instances.

On the whole, this is a well-balanced, well-written, informative book, certain to be of value to public health workers, and likely to be interesting to many others.

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CANCER AS I SEE IT. By Henry W. Abelmann, M.D., The Philosophical Library, New York, 1951. 100 pages. \$2.75.

This little book presents the author's interpretation of his observations and research on cancer in the last 45 years. The theme developed throughout is that all malignant disease is caused by a microscopic organism, and that all types of cancer are different manifestations of the invasion of this organism. Genetics and irritation are considered as predisposing factors in diminishing cell resistance, but the real cause is this pleomorphic parasite which he designates as a "mold fungus" and later as a "germ virus."

Included in this common etiology are all types of carcinoma, sarcoma, pernicious anemia, leukemia, Paget's disease, Hodgkin's disease, mycosis fungoides, and precancerous hyperplasia (which is called cancer granuloma). The type of cancer produced is due to the stage of pleomorphism and the reaction specific to each type of cell which it attacks. Melanomas are caused by a black mold fungus and chloroma by a green mold fungus.

The pleomorphic stages of this cancer parasite are considered to cover the spectrum of microscopic biology from a mold to the ultramicroscopic virus. In the mold stage, infiltration of the interstitial tissues causes a chronic inflammatory cancer granuloma. In the virus stage the parasite penetrates the cell membrane of a somatic cell and makes it a cancer cell, giving that cell all of its malignant characteristics.

The author considers the various inclusion bodies reported in cancer from the time of Virchow and San Felecis to Dr. Irene Miller, not as contaminants but as different forms of the organism that causes cancer. "The pleomorphic germ endowed with different properties can explain all the

diverse and curious phenomena met with in cancer." "Cancer is caused by the infection of a body cell, and there are therefore as many kinds of cancer as there are different kinds of body cells."

The major source of infection by the cancer germ is considered to be from the soil and through foods. Thus, care in what we put into our stomachs is considered the first line of defense in the prevention of cancer.

In addition to developing his unique and unproved hypothesis, Dr. Abelmann emphasizes the need of early diagnosis, public education and periodic examination. He suggests that a national cancer day should be set aside to make the public cancer-conscious.

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DIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS FOR STUDENTS OF MEDICINE. By Harold A. Abramson, M.D., Assistant Clinical Professor of Physiology, Columbia University. The Josiah Macy, Jr., Foundation, 565 Park Avenue, New York 21. 1950. 41 pages. \$1.00.

A sharp tool is a terrible temptation—for instance, mathematics. As a former sinner, the reviewer sympathizes with Dr. Abramson, but unhappily the author's dimensional analysis and sympodism and psychomotive forces are not impressive. His introductory statement, "No amount of purely mathematical reasoning can ever take into consideration the complexity of the emotional factors," may some day prove exaggerated, in consequence of vector analysis; but even granting the power of mathematics, this reviewer is not a bit converted to Dr. Abramson's eagerness to pump that kind of reasoning into psychiatrists.

Students of medicine, to all of whom Dr. Abramson directs his book, will (1) as a body prefer to work at the care of patients, or (2) if in research medicine, prefer fuller treatment of the subject, such as Griffin's "Mathematical Analysis" and Fisher's "Statistical Methods for Research Workers."

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METHODS IN MEDICINE—The Manual of the Medical Service of George Dock, M.D., Sc.D., Formerly Professor of Medicine, Washington University School of Medicine; Formerly Physician-in-Chief, Robert A. Barnes Hospital, St. Louis. A Comprehensive Outline for Clinical Investigation, Management and Treatment of Patients with Various Medical Disorders. By George R. Herrmann, M.D., Ph.D., Professor of Medicine, University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston. Second edition, completely revised. 488 pages. The C. V. Mosby Company, St. Louis, 1950. \$7.50.

This book is presented as a practical bedside guide for the clinical investigation of the common as well as some of the more rare medical conditions. It is intended for interns, residents, and practitioners, and details what the author considers minimal requirements for diagnostic study and medical management. Dr. Herrmann calls it a revision of the manual which he published 26 years ago, but actually it is a new book. Despite this the author, unfortunately, has hung on to certain items which, though useful in 1925, are of historical interest only in 1951.

The book has both good and bad points. It can be very handy as a compendium, listing a variety of information in its contents. It includes data on methods of history and physical examination, laboratory procedures and therapeutic methods. The material shown has very definite interest, but the reviewer finds himself not infrequently at a loss to explain why some items are in and others out. For instance, in a short summary of antibiotics, such a little-used one as Nisulfazole is given mention in the quite limited space available. The bibliography is also spotty: References are given for the management of renal stones and peripheral vascular disease, but none for irritable colon, nephritis or rheumatoid arthritis. Some of the methods are followed through thoroughly, but many others end up in a blind alley. In this regard one may mention the discussions on biopsy of muscle

(page 163) and on the technique for counting peripheral blood (pages 44-48). If one did not already know the techniques, he would have to look further than this book.

The style is very authoritative, which may irritate some readers, particularly when statements are inaccurate; for example, on page 277 the author states that the Takata test "has been found to be positive in any disease in which the serum globulin is over 3 per cent" (an erroneous conclusion of the year 1934).

The book cannot be recommended to the practitioner to employ for casual reference or detailed investigation on a given case. On the other hand, in a hospital which may adopt it as a methodology, it has a field of usefulness as a vade mecum for the intern.

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SKULL FRACTURES AND BRAIN INJURIES. By Harry E. Mock, M.D., Consulting Surgeon, St. Luke's Hospital, Chicago, Associate Professor Emeritus of Surgery, Northwestern University Medical School. The Williams and Wilkins Company, Baltimore, 1950. 806 pages. \$13.50.

A very comprehensive review of head injuries, skull fractures and brain injuries, written from the standpoint of the general surgeon. The author has had a most extensive experience in the management of head injuries and presents a very complete account of his wide experience. Since the vast majority of head injuries are seen by those other than neurosurgeons, this volume represents an excellent addition to the library of every practicing physician.

It is written in too great detail to be used as a textbook, but can be heartily recommended as a complete source of reference concerning the diagnosis, management and complications of head injuries. Dr. Mock presents a plan of management of these patients which, if adequately followed, no doubt would result in a definite lessening of mortality from such injuries. Many controversial points are discussed, and included therein are the views of numerous specialists in neurological surgery.

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THE CLINICAL USE OF RADIOACTIVE ISOTOPES. By Bertram V. A. Low-Beer, M.D., Associate Professor of Radiology, University of California Medical School, San Francisco, Calif. Charles C. Thomas, publisher, Springfield, Illinois, 1950. \$9.50.

Part One, 128 pages, concerns physics, measurements, and radiation hygiene, with seven tables and 27 figures, a list of 43 books, and references to 40 authors, not keyed into text. Part Two, clinical applications, fills the rest of the book, including bibliography of 11 books and 327 references keyed into text. There is also an appendix of useful factual data and dosage computations and an extensive table of isotopes. The index is fairly detailed, occupying 25 columns, and omits authors. This part has 58 figures, also four pages of color plates concerning the author's investigation of P₃₂ on blotting paper for treatment of skin lesions. Many of the figures are graphs, which with 34 tables give a good quantitative understanding.

This volume, in contrast to so many "edited" textbooks recently published, is all by one hand, which gives it a good unity of treatment. The coverage is very broad. The numerous clinical investigations with tracers and for therapy are grouped under the isotope concerned (12 elements). Therapy with P₃₂, Na₂₄, I₁₃₁ and Co₆₀ is covered in a chapter of 65 pages, preceded by 16 pages on the computation of internal dosage. The author is a practitioner of radiation therapy of long and wide experience, with a thorough grounding and containing professional contacts for nuclear physics and radiobiology. This wedding of theory and clinical experience in the one mind gives the book an unusually firm foundation. With the advances attained already and the bright future promise of radioisotopes in clinical medicine, every radiologist would do well to read this book and keep it handy.